

**NEW**

**LEFT**

**PARTY**

**P.O. BOX 236  
COLLINS ST  
MELBOURNE 3000**

# **VICTORIAN REGIONAL NEWSLETTER**

**NOVEMBER 1990**

## **END-OF-YEAR GENERAL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 28 1990**

**10 SMITH ST COLLINGWOOD**

The meeting will begin with drinks at 7pm with the meeting proper starting at 7.30pm sharp.

Issues to be considered:

- \* Review of activities during 1990
- \* Appointment of an organiser
- \* Organising a week-end conference in early 1991 to map out a realistic strategy for 1991.

## **END-OF-YEAR BBQ**

**SUNDAY DECEMBER 2 1990**

**12.30pm**

**7 Queen St Ormond, ph 578 5184**

**BYO meat & grog**

**Bring all your friends and celebrate the end of the year!**

## WHAT'S ON....WHAT'S ON....WHAT'S ON

**NLP Industrial Meeting**...Thursday November 8, 5.15pm, AMWU office, 174 Victoria Pde East Melbourne.

**NLP Banner-making working bee**...Saturday November 10, 2pm. 10 Smith St Collingwood.

**Tribune Fair**...The NLP will be organising kid's activities at the annual Tribune Fair, Saturday November 17, 10am-3pm, Collingwood Town Hall, Hoddle St Abbotsford.

**NLP Northern Group meeting**...Wednesday November 21, 7.30pm, Northcote Town Hall, High St Northcote.

**NLP Victorian General Meeting**...Wednesday November 28, 7pm drinks, meeting starts 7.30 sharp.

**NLP End-of-year BBQ**...Sunday December 2, 12.30pm, 7 Queen St Ormond. BYO meat & grog.

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## ROC REPORT

As you've probably noticed, it's been a long time between newsletters, or word of much NLP activity.

It was hoped that the successful Founding Conference in June would give the impetus for a burst of activity in the regions. But the problems encountered in forming a new political party - establishing our niche in the political landscape, working out what direction we want to go in, finding ways to involve people in activity, solidifying our organisational structure - are large.

But they're not insurmountable. We are in a critical period for the NLP's future success, and it's vital that we get our act together over the next twelve months.

With the end of the year quickly approaching, it's unlikely that we can do very much before then. So it's important that we start planning

now, and one of the first things that needs to happen is for more people to commit a little bit more time, energy and thought to make things happen.

One of the first problems to be tackled is to solidify our organisational structures, to provide a firmer basis for organising political activity. The August general meeting agreed on a number of steps to achieve this, and we should ensure they're implemented.

The first is to get the Regional Organising Committee working properly, which means that locality/interest groups need to meet and elect/appoint someone who will come to meetings and involve themselves in planning activities, and to liaise between the ROC and the group.

The ROC is suggesting that the general meeting on November 28 reviews what's

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happened this year, and considers some proposals for next year. The main activity planned is a 2-day (week-end) meeting in the country in late February/early March, to establish some priorities for our work.

The other important thing that needs to happen quickly is to find someone with the right skills to work, preferably full-time, for the NLP. An efficient organiser will go a long way to getting the organisation working properly, especially given the demands on the time of those who are already employed.

The ROC is working on some proposals for the general meeting to consider. These will hopefully be distributed prior to the meeting, so put aside some time to think about them, then come along to the meeting and contribute your ideas.

The following report was prepared for the recent National Organising Committee meeting, held in Sydney. The report will bring you up-to-date with what's been happening here in Victoria.

#### **NLP VICTORIAN REGIONAL REPORT**

##### **Activities**

**One general meeting** has been held since the Founding Conference, to report back from the Conference and to plan activities for the rest of 1990. About 30 people attended.

Apart from organisational issues, the meeting discussed several suggestions for political initiatives, including:

- \* **work around the MFP campaign**
- \* **the future of socialism**
- \* **international solidarity issues**
- \* **privatisation**
- \* **the general economic situation in Victoria**
- \* **'care in old age' issues.**

The main focus was to be on trying to develop the beginnings of an alternative economic strategy for Victoria, and to organise a seminar for NLP members and others on this. A small sub-committee has started preparing some material, but the seminar fell through when they were unable to get any 'name' speakers to agree to speak.

A working group involving NLP members and others has met regularly around the 'care in old age' issues suggestion. The group hopes to encourage, initiate and support efforts to address the particular needs of elderly people who have spent their lives working in the left and progressive movements. A number of specific ideas are currently being worked on.

Nothing of substance has occurred around any of the other suggestions. NLP members are participating in a broad working group around the **MFP campaign**. This group held a couple of activities - demonstrations, collecting signatures on petitions - but activity has fallen off with the MFP focus shifting to Adelaide.

Following an initiative from the **NLP industrial collective**, a meeting was held with the ALP Socialist Left unions, to discuss the general political and economic situation, and possible initiatives. The meeting was held at the height of the furore over the State Bank sale, and was dominated by it. NLP members who attended remarked that the SL reps at the meeting were also lacking in any alternative ideas or initiatives.

**The industrial collective** has been one of the few groups that has met regularly, with useful discussions around the main issues - wages, union amalgamations etc. At least one NLP leaflet, on wages, was distributed to delegates at a Vic Trades Hall Council meeting, and was well received. The Victorian group also initiated the national industrial meeting held in Melbourne last week-end.

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### Organisation

Our problems in generating political activities are reflected organisationally. Despite several attempts, the ROC still doesn't have its full membership. Without even a part-time organiser, what work is done falls on people who are already over committed elsewhere. We have yet to finalise our NOC members.

**There are currently 118 financial members, and another 130 people who have signed the Time To Act statement, but not (yet?) become members.**

As well as the industrial collective there are **locality groups** centred on the **northern suburbs, the western suburbs and the south eastern suburbs, mainly around St Kilda.**

The **northern suburbs group** has met regularly, and were involved with the local ALP SL branches in organising around the August local govt elections. The **western suburbs group** held a successful seminar in July on urban environmental issues, attempting to make links between union and community and environmental activists.

**The St Kilda group** are involved in a broad progressive coalition, "Turn The Tide", which has the majority on the St Kilda local Council. The St Kilda NLP group organised a very successful fundraiser for the coalition during the recent election campaign.

Activities, and even meetings, of all these groups (except the industrial collective) have dropped off in recent months.

### Future Activities

The end of the year looms fast, and we're doubtful that very much can be achieved between now and then. A **general meeting** is planned for late November, to review the year and start making plans for 1991.

The ROC is suggesting that a **week-end conference/planning meeting**, somewhere in the country, be held in late Feb/early March to set some priorities and achievable goals. We also want to make employing an organiser, on realistic wages and conditions, a high priority for the new year.

**A couple of social functions are also planned for December.**

### Overall

The general malaise affecting the party, which no doubt will be discussed at the NOC meeting, is as evident in Victoria as elsewhere.

We don't think it's time to despair. In the context of the political problems facing the left generally, both in Australia and internationally, starting and building a new party will be a slow and painful process.

Our focus has to be on small, achievable activities, that can involve members who are interested and have the time to get involved, supported by sophisticated propaganda that at least gets our message across and lets people know who we are and what we think.

The NOC's Action Plan should concentrate on these two things, setting goals that can be reviewed and modified if necessary over the next few months.

## CARE IN OLD AGE

The Victorian regional meeting in August adopted 'Care In Old Age' as one of our priority issues. The group working on this issue hopes to encourage, initiate and support efforts to address the particular physical and emotional needs of elderly people who have spent their adult life in service to leftwing parties as well as womens, peace, trade union and other progressive movements.

The New Left Party is a new organisation but it has its roots in struggles and organisations which date back many or more years. The Party can play an important role in supporting the people who took part, in preserving the best traditions of the past, and in ensuring our vision for the future has real roots in present-day care and support for 'our own'.

There have been considerable improvements in care for the elderly in recent years. Governments are giving the issues more attention partly because the elderly are becoming a much greater proportion of the population. Our group would welcome your views and experiences on how care for the elderly still falls short and improvements that can be made.

### Some issues

First, the prospects for our elderly activists vary as they become increasingly frail. They may face isolation alone or in a home where they have little in common with other residents. While others may be able to rely on a network of family and friends, nobody likes to ask for such help.

Second, people who are supporting ailing friends or relatives may find the physical support - bathing, toilet, dressing, cooking, etc. - more than they can manage.

Third, many elderly people wish to continue to be involved in political activity, or at the least in stimulating discussions about 'issues of the day'. Closer contact can enrich their lives, our lives and those of other progressive people.

### Possible approaches

A. finding ways for elderly activists in touch with each other and with others they have

known, and helping with transport to functions or meetings (perhaps regular lunchtime meetings).

B. Ensuring home help, social activities, nursing services and other appropriate care is available for the particularly frail who are at home. Backing this up with our network of carers where this is appropriate.

C. Working towards alternative living arrangements which allow groups of able-bodied elderly activists to support each other, while maintaining links with the broader community. Small retirement villages, cluster housing arrangements, and neighbouring houses or flats seem most appropriate.

D. An ambitious alternative for very frail people, would be a nursing home which could also be a social centre for the left; similar structures exist in the Jewish and Italian communities. Alternatively, places for small groups of people could be sought in existing well-operated centres.

E. Trade unions and other groups with larger funding bases could be encouraged to consider developing cluster housing, retirement villages and nursing homes which really do meet the needs of the elderly and don't cut them off from the community. Improvements to services for the elderly could also be sought in areas such as home help, respite care, social activities, nursing home conditions, night nursing at home, and appropriate health and housing.

F. Helping our elderly activists to record their histories and participation in the movements of their time.

Some of these ideas may come to fruition if the New Left Party and other groups and individuals work enthusiastically together. If you would like to have more information, or to become involved, contact:

<b>Joan Finger</b>	<b>478 4034</b>
<b>Olga Silver</b>	<b>818 2053</b>
<b>Jim Crosthwaite</b>	<b>497 2151</b>

## ORGANISER VACANCY

The NLP Victorian region requires an organiser, preferably full-time, part-time negotiable. The Regional Organising Committee is proposing that a wage of around \$30,000 (full-time) be paid, to make the job attractive for someone with the appropriate skills and experience.

The organiser's duties are as follows:

1. With the assistance of the ROC and other NLP members, to plan and initiate political activity around issues and movements in which members decide to get involved.
2. To be responsible for putting out regular newsletter and other correspondence as required.
3. To provide general support, information and encouragement to all NLP members.
4. To encourage voluntary help and develop volunteer structure.
5. To perform a range of administrative duties to maintain the organisation.

For further information contact Michael Evans on ph 417 7388, or apply in writing to PO Box 236 Collins St Vic 3000.

The ROC hopes to fill the position as early as possible in 1991. Applications and expressions of interest welcomed!



## STATE GOVERNMENT CUTBACKS

Cutting services is one response by the Victorian government to the financial crisis it faces. Community groups and unions are opposing many of these cuts and suggesting alternative ways of dealing with the crisis.

NLP members are active in many areas affected by the staffing and funding cutbacks. Public transport, community services, health, education, the environment, to name a few.

Have you got any examples to illustrate what our members are doing?

Apart from individual members' contributions, the NLP can potentially play

an important role in the current Victorian situation: linking activists and struggles, working out alternative funding options, developing a sound critique of the 'free market' approaches that are being developed, promoting solutions which integrate economic, social justice and environmentally sound goals.

If you want to discuss how a cutback can be tackled, to put out a leaflet, to contact others working around a particular issue, contact the Regional Organising Committee.

Send in any clippings from your local newspaper or elsewhere, which show the impact of government cuts.

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### NOC VACANCIES

***Nominations are called for three (3) Victorian delegates to the National Organising Committee, which has responsibility for the administration of the New Left Party nationally, in between National Conferences.***

***Nominations for these positions will be accepted up to the beginning of the general meeting on November 28. If you are unable to attend the meeting but wish to nominate, a written nomination should be sent, to arrive at the NLP address (PO Box 236 Collins St Vic 3000) no later than Friday November 23 1990.***

***For further information about the Committee, contact Michael Evans on phone 417 7388.***

### MEMBERS' SURVEY

For the new Left Party to be successful, it's important that the ROC and groups find out what resources they can draw on, and how members can best be supported in their current work.

We don't want to set up a giant project, but we do need to do it systematically.

Barbara Romeril and Jim Crosthwaite are currently working on a short but comprehensive survey, to be ready for distribution to members and supporters in early 1991.

Help would be appreciated in planning and carrying out the survey. If you would like to be involved in planning questions, testing, mail-outs, interviewing, entering results on computer, or interpreting results, please contact:

**Barbara on 484 4112 (w)  
Jim on 497 2151 (h)**

# HAVE YOU JOINED THE NLP YET?

The New Left Party was founded at a Conference in Sydney in June 1990. It now has a Policy Platform, a Constitution and an Action Plan for the next 12 months.

You don't have to commit your life to it, there are other things besides political activism. But by becoming a member you can at least keep in touch with what's happening, and get involved when you want to!

Unfortunately, due to mailing costs, we won't be able to afford regular mail-outs to anyone other than members, or supporters (non-members who pay an annual fee to receive newsletters, information, etc), from 1991.

So, why not do it now. Fill out the form below, get the special deals on membership to the end of 1990 or 1991, and send it back with your payment!

## NLP MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Income	Rate
<i>Less than \$10,000pa</i>	<i>\$20 to end of 1991, or \$5 to end of 1990</i>
<i>\$10,000pa - 14,999</i>	<i>\$40 " \$10 "</i>
<i>\$15,000pa - 19,999</i>	<i>\$60 " \$15 "</i>
<i>\$20,000pa - 24,999</i>	<i>\$80 " \$20 "</i>
<i>\$25,000pa - 29,999</i>	<i>\$100 " \$25 "</i>
<i>\$30,000pa &amp; over</i>	<i>\$120 " \$30 "</i>

## SUPPORTERS:

*\$20 to end of 1991, or \$5 to end of 1990.*

**PLEASE TICK ONE:**

..... **YES, I WANT TO JOIN THE NEW LEFT PARTY**

**OR**

..... **I WANT TO BECOME AN NLP SUPPORTER**

**I ENCLOSE \$..... FOR DUES/FEES TO THE END OF .....**

**NAME .....**

**ADDRESS .....**

**.....Postcode.....**

**PLEASE RETURN TO P.O. BOX 236 COLLINS ST MELBOURNE  
3000.  
RING 417 7388 FOR MORE INFORMATION.**